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Nescit tot milibus emptus
pauperibus miscere puer, sed forma, sed aetas
digna supercilio.

On this passage, H. L. Wilson, J. D. Lewis, Friedländer, J. D. Duff, and even J. E. B. Mayor say not a word.

Juvenal 8. 148-149:

ipse rotam adstringit sufflamine mulio consul,
nocte quidem. sed Luna videt, sed sidera testes
intendunt oculos.

Martial 10.72.8-9:

Non est hic dominus, sed imperator,
sed iustissimus omnium senator.

Pliny, Epp. 1.12.13:

Proinde adhibe solacia mihi, non haec, 'Senex erat, infirmus erat' (haec enim novi), sed nova aliqua, sed magna, quae audierim numquam, legerim numquam.

Neither Mr. Cowan, the English editor of Pliny, Epistles 1-2, nor Professor Westcott has any comment on the double *sed*.

Perhaps the best example of all is in that delightful passage, Petronius 1 (see also 44.7):

Et ideo ego adulescentulos existimo in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex eis quae in usu habemus aut audiunt aut vident, sed piratas cum catenis in litore stantes, sed tyrannos edicta scribentes quibus imperent filiis ut patrum suorum capita praecidant, sed responsa in pestilentiam data, ut virgines tres aut plures immolentur, sed mellitos verborum globulos et omnia dicta factaque quasi papavere et sesamo sparsa.

Thackeray has the usage several times. In *Pendennis*, Chapter VI, labelled Contains Both Love and War, the following words are to be found:

Helen, in her good humour, asked Mr. Smirke to be of the party. That ecclesiastic had been bred up by a fond parent at Clapham, who had an objection to dramatic entertainments, and he had never yet seen a play. *But* Shakespeare!—*but* to go with Mrs. Pendennis in her carriage, and sit a whole night by her side!—he could not resist the idea of so much pleasure, and made a feeble speech, in which he spoke of temptation and gratitude, and finally accepted Mrs. Pendennis's most kind offer.

Compare also *The Newcomes*, Chapter L, entitled In Which Kinsmen Fall Out:

. . . Calling him back after she had dismissed him, and finding pretext after pretext to see him—why did the girl encourage him, as she certainly did? I allow, with Mrs. Grundy and most moralists, that Miss Newcome's conduct in this matter was highly reprehensible; that if she did not intend to marry Clive she should have broken with him altogether; that a virtuous young woman of high principle, etc., etc., having once determined to reject a suitor, should separate from him utterly then and there—never give him again the least chance of a hope, or reillumine the extinguished fire in the wretch's bosom.

But coquetry, *but* kindness, *but* family affection, and a strong, very strong partiality for the rejected lover—these are not to be taken in account, and to plead as excuses for her behaviour to her cousin?

In Henry Esmond, Book 2, Chapter 5, entitled I go on the Vigo Bay Expedition, etc., I find a repeated *And yet*:

. . . I remember how furious the coffee-house wits were with Dick Steele when he set up his coach and fine house at Bloomsbury; they began to forgive him when the bailiffs were after him, and abused Mr. Addison for selling Dick's country house. *And yet* Dick in the spunging-house, or Dick in the Park, with his four mares and plated harness, was exactly the same gentle, kindly, improvident, jovial Dick Steele: *and yet* Mr. Addison was perfectly right in getting the money which was his, and not giving up the amount of his just claim, to be spent by Dick upon champagne and fiddlers, laced clothes, fine furniture, and parasites, Jew and Christian, male and female, who clung to him.

To W. Y. Sellar's well known book, *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age*: Horace and the Elegiac Poets, Andrew Lang prefixed a Memoir of the author. On page xliii of this Memoir occurs the following sentence:

Virgil's is an art derived from the Alexandrian period of Greek literature, *but* enlarged, *but* enriched, *but* fortified by the consciousness of "the greater freshness and vigour of the Roman genius, of the more vital force of their language, of their grander national life, of the privilege of being Romans, and the blessing of breathing Italian air". (The words in quotation-marks are quoted from Sellar, Virgil).

C. K.

THE ENGLISH ESSAY AND SOME OF ITS ANCIENT PROTOTYPES¹

I The English

The word *essay*² means 'experiment', or 'test'. We are told that it should be brief, "confined to a single aspect", "simple and single in its presentation", possessing the power of *refraction* as well as *reflection* in setting forth the personality of the writer. Some critics have gone so far as to dub it a "prose poem, confined for the most part to motifs that may broadly be called lyrical". So far so good, except that the last remark is overdone; the commonest expletive may perfectly well be regarded as a condensed lyric, and poetry in prose is a joust which wise knights of the pen nowadays will find it hard to carry off. Refinement on the definition is futile; when Dr. Johnson, in his characteristic gigantesque fashion, spoke of it as "an irregular undigested piece", the learned lexicographer was far from correct, and was perhaps affected by the title of his own Rambler. So hard it is to pigeon-hole the manifestations of the aesthetic in art or literature.

The essay in English is a distinctive type, natural to the genius of the race and the language. There is no art of writing which holds a more cherished place in the hearts of book-lovers than this short and subjective way of meandering through a subject until curiosity is satisfied and a mood answered. It pleases the Anglo-Saxon temperament, which ever, from the days of the Wanderer, has loved to brood and moralize, to express the *ego* of the writer in ways subject rather to intuition

¹This paper was read, as the President's Address, at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, at The Johns Hopkins University, April 30, 1920.

²For the English essay see Hugh Walker, *The Essay* (Channels of English Literature); C. B. Bradley, University of California Chronicles 1.5; and C. Beare, *The Development of the Essay*.

than to logic. For this reason it has grown into a type, as the English national and insular viewpoint widened. It is thus open to classification.

Montaigne founded the essay—though there were brave writers of essay before him. The classical material to which he was indebted has been so well worked out that it is not necessary to rehearse it here³. It has also since his day been a favorite with the French, and is still at its best in works like those of Anatole France⁴, and many another of the seasoned Gallic followers of reason and sanity. Montaigne's indebtedness to Seneca is self-acknowledged and profound. To Plutarch he bows deeply; from Cicero, Aristotle, Xenophon, Plato, Valerius, Gellius, he gleefully purloins—with this reservation, that the contributors must 'come to the point at once', with 'fragmentary pieces', and yet natural junctions of thought.

But we are here concerned rather with English and Latin essays than with those of the Continent. One can classify essays in English; but this has not been done for the Latin; it is even doubtful if it is possible or desirable to do this. It will, however, be of some advantage to discover how the Roman set forth his personal thoughts when refracted and limited "to a simple and single presentation". The situation here is parallel to that in pre-Baconian English literature, when essays were written without being tagged as such by their writers, as M. Jourdain spoke prose all his life without knowing it. Such material must be culled from homilies and satires and history and journals and letters⁵—even from poetry; for in those days an episode from an epic or a *chanson* contained what would nowadays be set forth in prose. And, just as Montaigne made use of philosophic dialogues, handbooks of house-keeping and travel, autobiography, epistles, and collections of apophthegms, so the predecessors of Bacon are legion, because the medium of presentation to the public was so vitally different from the 'leaders', editorials, and magazine articles of to-day.

The British essay begins in a mood of reverie, spoken and expressed by minstrels who have wandered far and seen many things, by Anglo-Saxon chroniclers who shyly show us prose flowers pressed and dried in occasional ecclesiastical commentaries, by 'men-of-all-work', like Giraldus Cambrensis, who burst into purple patches in praise of a Welsh landscape and its beauties, and in the prefaces of Caxton wherein are set forth the ideals of a publisher or a translator, and the difficulties of living up to these ideals. They are all muscular torsos; compare them with the exquisite chiselled marble of Lord Bacon, and they seem far below him in excellence. But the power and the promise are there.

Bacon stands to the English essay as Montaigne to the French, different though they are. The seventeenth century was reflective and creative at the same time;

it was original and scholastic; the Puritans had not succeeded in locking the door on imagination, even though they closed the theaters and turned the Elizabethan power into other channels. There is in Bacon and Burton and Sir Thomas Browne frank acknowledgment of indebtedness to classic models, along with a fearless exploration into the affairs of the mind which produced so many great philosophers and scientists during that period. Browne strings together exquisite melodies in the midst of Wagner-like recitative, gems of fancy united by a thread of learned quotation. Burton pulls down his whole classical and medieval library to descant on a mood or a custom, invoking Paracelsus to illustrate melancholia, and Horace to cap a paragraph or to wind up a theme. George Herbert and Vaughan, those mystic enthusiasts, interpolate invocations in the manner of St. Augustine; and Jeremy Taylor sublimates pagan and Christian sin. They are real essayists, these men—Bacon of course most of all; they are more genuine than the figures of Addison or Swift or Bolingbroke, in spite of their more direct indebtedness to Greece and Rome⁶. Earle's *Microcosmography* is almost a translation of Theophrastus's *Characters*; but is, for example, the immortal La Bruyère, translator of the Athenian and fore-runner of these seventeenth century sketch-writers, any the less of a genius for his obligations? Your seventeenth century went on intellectual voyages of discovery, as the Elizabethan went to Virginia and the Low Countries; while the eighteenth, like the friends of *Candide* in Voltaire, 'cultivated their own gardens'. Bacon quarries from Cicero and leaves a statue complete and from his own hand and inspired with his own genius. But as a creator he writes for all time. . . . "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability".

In the last analysis, what are Bolingbroke and those masters of the Age of Anne? They are attractive, but 'ginger-bready'; they are hallowed by wigs and powder and the shade of Almack's and Vauxhall. Their merit is restraint. They flower into meditative perfection in Addison and Steele, those masters of the quiet essay, whose genius alone prevents the contemporary diatribe from being bound in Russia leather and covered with dust. Their merit is that they once more keep the essay from becoming what it was in the days before Bacon, an unclassified type, lost in the homily and the satire, the autobiography and the letter. They are, in these master hands, "loose in finish and short in length", or else "elaborate in style, and limited in range". They are leisurely in manner, for time is no object. They are full of hidden references and yet are "moulded by some central mood". If too long or too technical, they lose the right to be regarded as essays, and become treatises. If too rambling and egoistic, we catch them up and read them the riot act, entitling them memoirs

³See P. Villey, *Les Sources et l'Evolution des Essais de Montaigne*, 2 volumes (Paris, 1908), especially I. 15 ff., 99, 279.

⁴*Le Jardin d'Epicure*, etc.

⁵See works like Map, *De Nugis Curialium*; Richard of Bury's *Philobiblon*; St. Ailred, *De Spirituali Amicitia*; etc.

⁶Roger Ascham and Ben Jonson (Timber) are essayists in the making. So are pamphlets like those of Nash (e. g. *Pierce Penniless*).

or autobiography. If they are redolent of letter-writing after the fine careless rapture of the first reading, we tie them up in pink ribbon. And so it goes; if the Addisonian conformation is lacking in this eighteenth-century school, we read them out of court, denying to them the necessary qualities of singleness, unity of mood, and personal emphasis.

But strength was to return. With the approach of the year 1800 the Monthly Reviews and the Gentleman's Magazines, full of soft soap and flabby with genteel chit-chat, led up to the sallies of Blackwood's, the nervous energy of the Edinburgh Review, and the Tory spear-point of the Quarterly. Tom Paine and Cobbett turned the wheel too far for us to call them essayists; they were pamphleteers. But a wondrous essay is evolved out of the pages of these periodicals; ideas danced and sang in print after the French Revolution had set men adrift on the sea of social and intellectual freedom. We therefore find the true path amid these productive cross-roads, and set off with Hazlitt, walking the wide turn-pike with a copy of the Nouvelle Heloise. On Going a Journey, The Prizefight—these are real essays—"single in presentation". And Charles Lamb, the frolic and the gentle, is worth them all. He is dependent on none, for he has fused them all. He has the polish of a Roman, the sympathy of a Greek, the wistful melancholy of his Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and the 'patness' of a Louis Quatorze Frenchman. He shakes hands with Bacon across two centuries of essayists; genius stands at each end, and talent fills in the intervening space.

The Victorian essayists were great men; but they wrote to prove some point, no matter how deeply and suggestively they may have felt their concern. Pater and Ruskin were art critics; when they ride a hobby, as the latter did, or make historic studies of the Renaissance, like the former, they are again pamphleteers or treatise-writers. But when they burst into a sublime passage on the Campo Santo at Pisa, or describe aqueducts, "marching like giant mourners at a nation's grave", and allow reflection to rise superior to logic, they become priceless essayists for the nonce. Matthew Arnold fought Philistinism; your true essayist avoids it. Preachers are not subjective enough for such introspection; they must, like the orator, aim to convince; an occasion must be conquered.

Stevenson recalls them, as Bacon and Lamb did before him, to the true essay. With him, one muses over the Scotland of old time in a portrait gallery; one sees the Camisards as personal friends in the Cevennes; one goes a-searching after mental landscapes along Dutch and French rivers; and one penetrates the personality of a book instead of commenting on its history and influence. Here, in R. L. S., is the power of refraction, seen at its most brilliant stage, both in the man and in the pen. Along with Stevenson were men like Alexander Smith, author of Dreamthorpe, who over-reflected and overrefracted until his musings melted refinedly away into the quiet English atmosphere; they

have not body enough to be taken seriously in English literary history.

At the present day the writers of essay are legion—the morning and evening 'colyumist'; the monotones of Dr. Frank Crane; the leader-writers of the London Times, whose delightful pieces have recently been put into book form; fugitive pages like Mr. Galsworthy's Motley. Perhaps Mr. E. V. Lucas reaches the most genially successful stage. But there is the same generalizing and homilizing that we found at times in the day of Queen Anne. Someone is preaching nature, forgetting that the art of writing is, in the words of Sainte-Beuve, 'not in saying the thing, but in making us think about it'. Topics of the day make depredations on pure literature. But, after all, we are too near to criticize; Mr. Alden is right when he says that we are so near to our lives that we are governed by the rules of life rather than by the rules of art. And if art is life, what's the difference? The detachment of a Montaigne, a Lamb, or a Stevenson, is difficult in the days of telephones and aeroplanes.

II The Greek

The roots of the essay, like most of the imperishable creations of the human mind, reach back to a Greek foundation⁷. The dialogue, the diatribe, the treatise, the autobiography, and the epistle are prototypes and containers of ancient essay; and so are the episodes and certain parts of the lyric which would nowadays be written in prose. Essay will be found embedded in the speeches of a Pericles or the anecdotes of a Herodotus. Also, in the little Atticides of the Greek genealogists and publicists are buried pages of the same type, which it is a delight and a fascination to unearth. They contain such nuggets as those which we find later in the Christian sermons and the lectures of medieval teachers.

We are compelled, in a survey of Greek and Roman essays, to excerpt and cull from various sources, because ancient literature ran very strongly according to type and form. The content was determined by the meter, the framework, the tradition of some previous master. English literature, especially after Bacon, gives us essays as such—known and refined. Ancient literature, like the era in England before Caxton or Ascham or Bacon, furnishes no single type which can be denominated essay; for this reason we are compelled to ransack all the classic authors, except certain obviously excluded types, for our essays. But they are there.

Greek literature, although the *ego* in the national consciousness did not manifest itself to as great a degree as among the practical and contact-loving Romans, contains many a gem, buried in longer pieces of writing.

We first discover the essay-motif in poetry, at a time when prose was limited to inscriptions on pillars and temple-walls. We find that the almanac-system of Hesiod bears much resemblance to the *pièces discourues* of Tupper and Poor Richard. Moralizing and

⁷As Montaigne himself did when constructing his Theory of essay.

gnomic elements brought it out: The Seven Wise Men, Phocylides and his Saws, Semonides of Amorgos and his diatribes against the female sex, but above all Theognis. Here are revolutionists, misanthropes, and seafarers carrying on a literary warfare against Destiny in the same manner as the sea-buffed minstrels and out-at-elbows retainers of a kingly Anglo-Saxon house. They brood over fate, *briefly and subjectively*, but there is no real essay yet. Prose arrives with the separate episodes which one is richly rewarded for seeking in the historiographers. Ionia had leisure, and leisure is necessary for a finished essay; rich and indolent cities, lapt by the blue Mediterranean, brought out a species of musing which lures us on like Stevenson's Travels with a Donkey, where excitement is imaginative and time is unfettered. Of course at this stage there is more story than moral. But why not? *Historiè* had to have a point and a local habitation. It is a sort of dependable mathematical formula—that the separate parts of a subjective prose author may often be regarded as essays, just as, in Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, we find digressive pieces On the Folly of Duelling, On Mercenary Soldiers, etc. There is a touch of it in such passages as Herodotus 1.93 (The Tomb of Alyattes) and 1.131 (The Persians and their Worship on the Mountain-tops). See also Thucydides 2.15 (On the Memorials and Political System of Ancient Attica). So we pass through many charming bits of chronicle. Some remind us of Montaigne—such topics as Why no Crow has ever been seen on the Acropolis, On Poets, On the Fixed Stars⁸. Men begin to browse more, to ramble more intellectually and speculatively. They are preparing for a studied ease which, in oratory, for example, is making ready for Gorgias. These orators, while writing for a particular occasion, often wander, as did Herodotus the historian, into digressions of the sort first mentioned.

Not so very distantly related to these essays appearing among the orators are the numerous treatises on painting and sculpture—the sort of unscientific aesthetics which so delighted critics like Dugald Stewart in the early nineteenth century. They are the forerunners of Pliny's famous epistolary essay on the statuette of an old man upon whom 'the wrinkles stand out as if he were alive'.

Xenophon in the Memorabilia often rambles *briefly and subjectively*. Even more so does he chatter on in the Oeconomicus ('Good Housekeeping'); but the argument, for all the informality, is so close and consecutive that these works go wholly into the dialogue type: they are tame Platons, and hence not real essays.

Again, with the passage of a few years, we come upon Isocrates. This student and architect of style, though many of his pieces are national, builds up a leisurely lengthy study from which many an essay may be culled, and which is often itself essay *in extenso*. The 'showpiece' is gradually preparing itself for perfection in the hands of a Dio Chrysostom. Note the

passage from the Helene of Isocrates on Beauty and Chastity⁹. And as for Theophrastus, he is an essayist without doubt, as his followers, La Bruyère, Hall, Earle, and Overbury, amply prove.

With the turn of the Christian era the originality of ideas runs out; and, as is often the case, the précieux enters upon the stage. Among these essayists are Herodes Atticus, Aristides, and Dio Chrysostom (The Hunter of Euboea). But Plutarch, Pausanias, and Lucian, as they are among the last, so are the best of the Greek essayists. There is nothing better than Plutarch's piece On Garrulousness¹⁰. Pausanias, though an antiquary, often pauses long enough to commune in the approved manner, as in his description of the sacred grove of Asclepius at Epidaurus¹¹. These men might well be ancestors of Montaigne.

Lucian, perhaps, is the greatest master of them all, as far as regards form, humor, and concentration upon a single subject¹². There is a charming little skit on Amber, in which the Eridanus boatmen deride the poetry-deluded inquirer into the Phaethon myth. And better yet—note his essay on The Fly:

'You may be sure I propose to mention the most important point in the nature of the fly. It is, I think, the only point that Plato overlooks in his discussion of the soul and its immortality. When ashes are sprinkled on a dead fly, she revives and has a second birth and a new life from the beginning. This should absolutely convince everyone that the fly's soul is immortal like ours, since after leaving the body it comes back again, recognizes and reanimates it, and makes the fly take wing'.

And then follows an analogy in the allusion to the story of Hermotimus of Clazomenae,

'whose soul would often leave him and go away by itself, and then, returning, would occupy his body again and restore him to life'.

Here is humor and learning and polish—all devoted to the elaboration of a central point. The abstract idea—found so often in Montaigne and Seneca—appears also in Lucian. The piece on Slander is developed like a Spectator paper with the classical accompaniment of Furies and abstract characters, Apelles and Ptolemy—just the combination of anecdote and delicately developed commonplace which the English essay reveals. The diatribe and dialogue play a part also—the mock-orator divides his piece into the threefold study of slanderer, 'slanderee', and judge.

These are but selections from among many of Lucian, the artist of dialogue and prose satire. They clearly correspond to our essay, though not marked by the ancients as such¹³.

⁸54-58.

⁹For a good version in English, see Plutarch's Select Essays, translated by T. G. Tucker. Other good examples are On Old Men in Public Life; Concerning Busybodies; On Moral Ignorance in High Places; On Bringing up a Boy; On Superstition.

¹⁰See Frazer's edition, 2.27 (the reference is to the edition in six volumes).

¹¹See Harmon's translation in the Loeb Classical Library, 1.35, 75, 83, 177, 361.

¹²These skits—called by the Romans *nugalia*—were fairly frequent at this time. Dio has a 'Gnat'; others wrote on Gout, Blindness, Deafness, and Baldness. See Fronto on Smoke and Dust (Haines, Correspondence of Fronto, 1.40, in the Loeb Classical Library).

¹³See Gilbert Murray, History of Greek Literature, 121.

It is especially noteworthy that most of these Greek writers lived during epochs which followed the hey-day of the Greek classic era; their careers took place after Marathon and the tragedies of Sophocles and Aristophanic comedy had become a tradition; when Theophrastus and Menander and Euripides and the later orators had brought rationalism and type-study, and when the shades of human character offered more material for study and observation than the Propylaea, the Zeus of Phidias, the buskin of the tragic masters, or the glory of a sea-power which fosters ambition and state-cult rather than reflection and individualism.

III The Roman

It must be admitted at the start that the Romans had no more idea of the essay as a type than the Greeks had. They were familiar with treatises on husbandry and scientific subjects; they enjoyed the philosophical discourse, the dialogue, and the diatribe; they embodied much of their continuous anecdote in the epistle; they paused in their history-writing to comment on cause and effect and to study the characters of their heroes or villains; they were biographers; and they wrote *de rebus suis*¹⁴ with a gusto to which Leo has called our attention. Above all, they were orators. One who collects material for the Latin essay must therefore cull from these various prose sources any passages which dwell at length "on the external conditions of a subject in so far as it affects the writer". Ancient matter must be treated according to modern literary methods, for the English essay has a status which the Latin essay never titularly possessed.

The ancients to a greater degree used verse as a reflective medium¹⁵. Their genius muses and moralizes less than the Anglo-Saxon; they were less subjective than the moderns—as one will see on comparing Lucian's Visit of Anacharsis with Goldsmith's Citizen of the World or Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes. And the Romans, a strenuous and rather unimaginative farming folk, produced literature in the beginning no more than the Pennsylvania colonial farmer, or the Genoese merchant, or the Carthaginian trader. An essayist must take time to be personal. But all of a sudden, when half Italy was Roman, and a yearning Eastward towards the source of culture began to stimulate them, they copied, and copied. But their manifold attempts resulted in literary success.

Ennius, as in other fields, broke ground in the essay also. The Hedyphagetica, though written in verse, is an attempt to refine Roman gastronomy in the spirit of Brillat-Savarin's Physiologie du Gout. This is not subjective writing, nor simple, and yet it "revolves about a single topic"—the banquet. But more than this, the Euhemerus is the 'first book of Latin artistic prose of which we know'¹⁶.

¹⁴As did Catullus, Scaurus, Rutilius, and Cicero—whether as *apologiae* or as triumphal harangues.

¹⁵See certain parts of the Georgics, the Journey to Brindisi, certain of Horace's Epistles, and the Silvae of Statius. In our day such material would be written in prose, by E. V. Lucas, or Walter Pater, or Paul Elmer More.

¹⁶Leo, *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur*, 202.

As we should expect, it is the handbook, or treatise, worked out by a practical Roman, that takes the first fearless steps in the direction we wish to follow. Cato suffuses the common things of life with his own *ego*. All that he says is Cato. He looked inward, to the glories of farming and local history. This is the usual psychology of the essayist: a return to a more limited topic—an abandonment of universal themes for particular hobbies. We have seen it in Stevenson's abandonment of French for Scotch, in Lamb's immortalization of Christ's Hospital and rural England, and in Montaigne's retreat from cosmopolitanism to his tower-study near Bordeaux. In the *Origines* and in the *De Re Rustica* Cato resembles the English garden-treatise writers of the eighteenth century. His Preface is the only passage of his agricultural work that has any claim to be regarded as essay; and, even at that, it is probably no more essay than is Livy's Introduction to his History. But it makes a slight start in that direction:

'It is worth while to make money by trade, if one can do it without risk, and likewise to make money by investment if one can do it with integrity. Our ancestors took this view, and established a law that a thief should be fined double what he stole, and a charger of interest four times what he charged. And how far they regarded a charger of interest as worse than a thief you can judge for yourself. When our ancestors praised a good man, they praised him in the guise of a good farmer and a good tiller of the soil. They thought a man was praised most highly when they praised him in these terms. Trade . . . is dangerous and brings trouble. But farming produces men of strength and soldiers of sinew . . . and men of that profession are men who think no ill'.

The method of Cato goes naturally into that of Varro: their subject-matter overlapped, and the later of the two is especially remembered for his remarks on the farm and on the biographic element of Roman history. He is essentially Sabine, a farmer, and a Roman. Compare Varro's *Res Rusticae* 1.4.3 ff., On the Value of a Wholesome Climate—the sensible arrangement of doors and windows to let in air, and the feats of Hippocrates and Varro himself in cleaning out bad sanitation. Or 3.17.2 ff.—On Various Kinds of Fish Ponds. Following out the same idea, one may similarly interpret parts of Columella's Preface to his treatise on farming, and the preliminary remarks of Vitruvius's work on architecture.

The form of 'retreat-literature', of which I spoke in connection with Cato, did not take definite shape until the Roman turned to it from sheer desire to escape the turmoil of affairs. When philosophy led the way to contemplation, the Roman did not abandon public life; as he built villas with violet-beds and colonnades for week-end recuperation, so he took to the dialogue of philosophy as mental refreshment. Hence comes the 'garden-seat essay' which, though mostly technical, is greatest in the hands of Cicero. There are 'Introductions' which show the type; there are episodes set in by themselves; and there are scattered musings¹⁷, which

¹⁷E. g. The Glory of Literature—from the Archias.

might properly be removed from their text, as the Homeric episode was presented as a separate piece by the purple-clad singer.

But with the *De Amicitia* and the *De Senectute* we may stop to contemplate. Here are real essays. There is no connection with the forum and the rostrum, except through personal reminiscence. Gaius Gracchus, says Leo¹⁸, would not have been a literary personality if he had not been a political personality. But the heroes of these two pieces of Cicero are not dependent for their literary flavor upon their business; it is what they say, and from what angle they reflect, that is of interest. These dialogues are personal, reflective, comfortable, and comparatively brief. They fill most of the requirements of a modern essay: see the *Laelius*, Chapter 20: 'Friendship is nothing else than a partnership in all heavenly and earthly privileges in a spirit of good will and love. I think that, with the exception of wisdom alone, no better gift has ever been bestowed upon man by the immortal gods. . . . It is virtue itself that produces and keeps friendship, and in no wise can friendship exist without virtue'.

In hunting through Cicero's letters, however, for essay-material, it is mostly a process of elimination. The matter is too *occasional*. The purpose is too concrete. No respectable essayist writes 'with a purpose'. Now Cicero wrote as Pepys wrote his diary, as Byron plastered John Murray with humor or Tom Moore with sentiment. The *ego* of Cicero is practical and specific. A careful search through Tyrrell and Purser's edition shows that we must reject the directions to Quintus on the government of a province, the various pieces of literary and artistic criticism which serve a purpose, the character sketches of Caesar (photographs only, for ulterior ends), and the accounts of dinner-parties and fishing-trips (since these are matters for a diary). We might admit the following: I. 358 ff., On the Sorrows of Exile; II. 51 ff., On the Immortality of his own Renown; II. 94 ff., On Gladiators; III. 205 f., On Craving for the City; IV. 286 ff., On the Value of Literature to the Business Man; V. 148, On Keeping old Letters; IV. 411 ff., On Epicurean Philosophy.

But we must remember that, when Cicero sat down to write these passages, he did not fill himself full of one theme, one mental viewpoint, one idea; he dashed off a few abstract thoughts on a concrete foundation. Herein lies the difference between the scrub-oak style of his Letters and the mellow landscape of the *Laelius* and the *Cato Maior*.

Sallust's *Catiline* is not an essay; it is a historical treatise. So is the *Germania* of Tacitus, and the *Dialogus De Oratoribus*. There may be parts which apply to our criterion; but they are such a closely woven part of the whole that they have to be omitted. Nepos is scientific biography; but there are parts of Curtius Rufus, Valerius Maximus, and Velleius Paterculus which conform to the essay standard.

There are, however, certain writers who are essentially essayists. These are the Younger Pliny, Gellius,

Fronto, Apuleius, Macrobius, and above all Seneca the Younger. These men are almost of a type; they almost consciously follow the *genre*. Three of them are letter-writers, two are antiquarians, and one is a rhetorician. And curiously enough, two of them—Gellius and Fronto—are strong opponents of Seneca, the Latin essayist *par excellence*.

The Younger Pliny—how fascinating and comfortable he is, how egoistic, rambling, and subjective!

'Did you ever see the source of the Clitumnus? . . . There is a hill, rising in a gentle slope, well-wooded and shaded with old cypress. Forth from this pours a spring, working its way out in many channels of unequal size . . . and widening out into a pure and glassy stream, so clear that you can count the pennies and the pebbles that gleam on the bottom. . . . Soon it becomes a great river, even navigable for boats. . . . which need no oars when going downstream, and when travelled against the current can be conquered with difficulty by oars and punt-poles. . . . The banks are clothed with ash and poplar trees. . . . the temperature of the water is cold as snow, and not less white. . . . Chapels are scattered about, with the statue of a god to each. . . . In short, everything there will give you pleasure . . . ; you can even study the inscriptions on the pillars and walls, in which the spring and the god are praised'¹⁹.

Gellius, who lived in the age of the Antonines, was an antiquarian, a prototype of Isaac D'Israeli—whose *Curiosities and Amenities of Literature* still serve as a treasure-hoard for the seeker in bookish byways. He saw everything continually through his own spectacles, just as the real essayist ought to do, and yet his information is of universal interest. Though most of his writing refers to etymology and the use of words, yet we derive from him much informal comment upon the life of his day. We find the philosopher Taurus (1.26) descanting on the question whether wise men ever lose their tempers, Favorinus rambling like Coleridge in a description of points of the compass (2.22), or the classification of colors (2.26), or the various epochs at Rome when men wore beards or shaved smooth (3.4). Alexander's horse and its qualities are portrayed (5.2); so, too, tales of witchcraft (10.12), the definition of *elegantia* and its changes in meaning (11.2), the long-suffering of the Stoics (12.5), and the denunciations of the Chaldaean astrologers by Favorinus the philosopher (14.1). The type of Gellius is at times perilously near to the treatise; but it serves often as an equivalent of an excursion into the field of essay.

Fronto was a literary courtier. He was master of the political pamphlet in the form of a letter, a connoisseur in the fine points of style and language, and a conscious archaizer who ran back to Cato for his model. He strikes out the essay not infrequently, as in his discourse on Fools and Angels in literature, when he defines ignorance as better than half-knowledge²⁰.

¹⁸See especially also (among others) 1.9, On Wasting Time; 2.17, On the Villa; 3.6, The Corinthian Statue; 4.24, Memoirs of a Barrister; 7.9, On Quiet Study; 7.27, On Witchcraft; 9.36, Diary of Country Life.

²⁰See the *Eulogy of Smoke and Dust*, 211; On the Style of Cicero, 61; On Sleep and Wakefulness, 9; On the Excellence of an Orator, 20; On the Climate of Naples, 30. (The numbers here refer to the pages of Nabes's edition).

¹⁸*Geschichte der Römischen Literatur*, 300.

Apuleius and Macrobius, the former of whom follows Lucian and the latter the excerpting encyclopedists, contain dashes of essay. The Florida are partly of this type; and Macrobius, like Athenaeus, offers nosegays which may be picked out from the spreading text and exhibited as separate blooms.

This brings us to Seneca, who seems more of an essayist than any other Roman. Bacon was right when he called his Letters "Essaies". There is no doubt of his subjectivity and personal feeling; when they are essays, they are brief and they revolve about a central point. Works like the Dialogues are not essays; they are treatises, diatribes, studies, or pamphlets. But the Epistles are clearly what we seek. Among them, the best example is 57, On the Trials of Travel, wherein the hazardous trip through the dust-swept Naples tunnel is described, and the personal moral drawn—that the intensity of life's impressions matters but little, if the mental balance is preserved throughout. Epistle 87, a description of a picnic party, is an essay on the simple life; it might be divided into two parts, the second beginning with the examination of philosophical syllogisms and therefore not coming under our scope of treatment. Epistle 56 is essay *par excellence*, with its comments on the noises and the racket of a bathing establishment, over which Seneca had taken lodgings. It is all a *personal* interpretation—the objective is fused into the mind of the writer²¹.

I hold, therefore, that Seneca founded the essay in Latin, in the terms of which it is so called by us. While further search will reward a seeker, a process of rigid elimination establishes at least the following as essays in the Latin language: parts of Cato, the Laelius and the Cato Maior of Cicero, bits of such writers as Valerius Maximus, much of the Younger Pliny, much of Gellius, some of Fronto, Apuleius, and Macrobius, and, finally, a fair portion of Seneca's Epistles. There was no acknowledged type; the Roman cast of mind was not moulded to this form as much as to certain others; and selection is and always will be subjective. Yet, when a critic correctly remarks that the three enduring and fundamental forms of literary creation in English are the oration, the lyric, and the essay, we are naturally tempted to enquire further about the only one of these three which, in Latin and Greek literature, has not been thoroughly investigated and identified.

THE WILLIAM PENN CHARTER SCHOOL, Philadelphia. RICHARD M. GUMMERE.

²¹Excellent essays, in particular, are Epistles 2, 7, 12, 28, 38, 41, 51, 54, 67, 69, 77, 80, 83, 86, 91, 100, 104, 108, 110, 122.

THE WASHINGTON CLASSICAL CLUB

The new officers of The Washington Classical Club entered upon their term *optimis auspiciis*. The first two meetings under their administration have been notably successful.

On the evening of January 22, in the auditorium of the Carnegie Public Library, an illustrated lecture on Athens in the Time of St. Paul was given by Professor Mitchell Carroll, of George Washington University, director and editor of Art and Archaeology. The meeting, open to the public, was well attended. Dr. Carroll's lecture was an ideal one for such an occasion, combining well-chosen pictures of beautiful scenery and

architecture with a wealth of interesting information and an unobtrusive but cumulatively convincing development of the fact that Hebrew and classical history and literature, the Christian religion and Greek philosophy, and modern thought and civilization are inextricably interwoven.

A four-page folder had been prepared by the Officers of the Club, stating the character and the purpose of the organization, with reasons for joining it; it also gave the programme for the season, and included an application blank for membership. These were given out at the door of the hall, and it is hoped that they may produce *mirificos fructus*.

On the afternoon of February 12, about twenty-five members of the Club were present at a luncheon given in honor of Dr. Edward Lucas White, of Baltimore, author of *El Supremo*, *An Unwilling Vestal*, *The Song of the Sirens*, etc. Instead of reading from his published works, as announced in the invitations, Dr. White took the company into his confidence and recited extracts from a novel which he is now writing, the hero of which is a Roman knight in the days of the Emperor Commodus. The story is told in the first person, and Dr. White, speaking without manuscript or notes, so thoroughly identified himself with his hero that the listeners seemed to be actually spending an afternoon in ancient Italy and sharing the thrilling experiences so realistically described.

Before the reading, a Latin playlet, *King Alfred and the Cakes*, written by the President of the Club, Miss Mildred Dean, of the Central High School, was cleverly given by three of her pupils. The room in which the meeting was held had an open fireplace which formed just the stage-setting needed; and the unfortunate cakes were most obviously burned (there was both ocular and olfactory evidence of that). The snapping eyes and menacing forefinger of the indignant Rustica made the fluent Latin with which she expressed her opinion of the abashed monarch very distinctly 'alive', and also demonstrated that the Votive Case is well worth learning.

CHARLES S. SMITH,
Corresponding Secretary.

THE CLASSICAL LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

The winter meeting of The Classical League of Philadelphia, held on Friday, February 25, at the Art Alliance, 1823 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, was the most successful in the history of the League. Seventy-four persons were present at the dinner, every one a professional classicist. The Classics are far from being dead in the Philadelphia district.

Dinner was served at 6.30. Miss Jessie E. Allen, the President of the League, presided. At this function, in accordance with past traditions, the men were the guests of the women. Among the intellectual features of the meeting were an address by Dr. Fred Gowing, Principal of the Philadelphia High School for Girls, who set forth with telling satire some trends in modern education; and an address by Dr. Kelley Rees, former President of The Classical Association of the Pacific States, who spoke authoritatively on Changing Viewpoints in Educational Theory. In the formal paper of the evening, Dr. Henry M. Sanders, Professor of Greek in Bryn Mawr College, presented some highly original interpretations of difficult passages in Sophocles's *Antigone*. The final number on the programme was an Illustrated Talk on Modern Greece, by Michail Dorizas, formerly of Roberts College, Constantinople, and now at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Dorizas was a member of the American International Committee on Balkan Questions during and after the Peace Conference, and through his intimate first-hand knowledge of Balkan affairs, especially those concerning Greece, he was able to make his talk intensely interesting.

ARTHUR W. HOWES, Secretary.